



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2015



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CITY OF MEMPHIS RECIEVES TOTAL OF \$3.9 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT TESTING, INVESTIGATIONS AND CASE MANAGEMENT

MEMPHIS, TN – Mayor A C Wharton, Jr. today announced that the City of Memphis received a \$1,909,124 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and \$1,995,000 million from the New York County District Attorney's (DANY) Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Program. The DOJ is awarding \$41 million and DANY is awarding \$38 million for a total of nearly \$80 million to cities across the nation, the single largest contribution to this effort ever.

"I am pleased that both the DOJ and DANY recognize the work that the Memphis Sexual Assault Kit Taskforce is doing to test every kit in our inventory and to seek justice for every survivor these kits represent," said Mayor Wharton. "These grants will allow us to continue the work that began two years ago using no additional City of Memphis tax dollars."

The City of Memphis is one among many cities across the country with large numbers of rape kits being sent to labs for DNA testing. It is estimated that there are about 70,000 untested kits nationally.

"We know that these rape kits can help catch perpetrators and prevent additional attacks, so we should do everything we can to cut through this backlog and give victims the justice they deserve," said Congressman Cohen. "It is a critical component of keeping our communities safe from predators. That's why I was proud to champion this new grant program and why I am pleased to announce that Mayor Wharton's strong grant application has helped win our city almost \$2 million in new federal funding to provide justice to victims."

The Mayor's Sexual Assault Kit Taskforce began tackling the untested kits in the fall of 2013 and since then has been sending kits to labs as soon as they have the capacity to receive them.

"So far, 40% of the City's inventory of 12,374 kits dating back to the 1970s has completed the testing process, another 20% have been shipped and are at laboratories waiting testing, but we still have another 40% of the kits that we need to send for analysis. These

grants will help us complete that work." said Doug McGowen, leader of the SAK Taskforce. "While the DANY grant will be used strictly for testing kits, funds from the DOJ will be used for testing, additional staff requirements, training, travel for expert witnesses, as well as for equipment, an evidence management system, and for victim support services."

Memphis is one of only a handful of cities in the country to approach their inventory testing efforts with considerable collaboration between the Mayor's office, police, prosecutors, victim advocates and victim service providers. The City has dedicated significant resources to the effort, including a 20-member cross-functional, multi-agency taskforce, 14 police detectives, two special victim prosecutors and millions of dollars in local funding for kit testing and building a new dedicated, state-of-the-art evidence storage facility.

The city will host a SAK Summit for Cities on October 19-21, 2015 at Memphis Cook Convention Center to provide a forum for training and sharing of best practices among cities dealing with untested sexual assault kits.

Additionally, the city has convened five community conversations to update, engage and educate the public on kit testing, sexual assault and domestic violence issues. The next community conversation is set for October 29, 2015 and will focus on the topic of consent. The Taskforce recently launched a multi-year awareness and prevention campaign called Memphis Says NO MORE, which is an outgrowth of the national NO MORE campaign.

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Under the leadership of Mayor A C Wharton Jr. since 2009, Memphis is becoming a City of Choice by focusing on creating safe and vibrant neighborhoods, investing in young people, creating economic opportunities for all, and delivering excellence in government. Memphis is famous around the world for the convergence of creativity and innovation that produced its most famous exports – legendary music; the company that invented modern world commerce – FedEx, and the international leader in curing catastrophic childhood illnesses – St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. It has a celebrated entrepreneurial history, more Fortune 500 companies than any other Tennessee city, and it has been named one of the best cities in the U.S. for startups. It is famous as home for Elvis Presley's Graceland, Sun Studios, Stax Museum of American Soul Music, Beale Street, the National Civil Rights Museum, and the most unspoiled riverfront on the Mississippi River. City of Memphis, which employs more than 6,000 people with an annual budget of approximately \$650 million, has developed and led programs that have dramatically reduced crime, increased jobs, improved Memphis' quality of life, and attracted national attention and investments in the city. For more information visit www.memphistn.gov.